

Wildcat, Jayhawk players to watch

BY TATE STEINLAGE

THE COLLEGIAN

All eyes will be on Bramlage Coliseum Monday night as K-State battles No. 8 Kansas on ESPN's Big Monday. The contest marks the 297th installment of the Sunflower Showdown, the second of the 2013-14 season.

The Jayhawks cruised to an easy 86-60 victory in the first game on Jan. 11 in Allen Fieldhouse. The result gave us a good look at the players to look for in Monday's all-important sequel.

The K-State leading scorer will have to forget his freshman status



EMILY DESHAZER | THE COLLEGIAN

K-State junior forward Thomas Gipson dunks against Kansas center Joel Embiid on Jan. 11 at Allen Fieldhouse in Lawrence.

K-State
Freshman guard Marcus Foster

Foster struggled to find his usual groove in the first meeting between the in-state rivals. The freshman shot just 3-12 from the field, ending the afternoon with seven points.

Despite that performance, don't expect the Kansas defense to fall asleep on him. Foster enters the game averaging 14.7 points per contest, and is coming off his best outing yet as a Wildcat when he went for 34 points against the Texas Longhorns Saturday.

The K-State leading scorer will have to forget his freshman status

once more and step up with a big performance to give the Wildcats an opportunity to steal a win at home.

Junior forward Thomas Gipson

It was probably the quietest 10 points and four rebounds in Gipson's K-State career earlier this year against Kansas.

The six-foot-seven-inch junior managed to stay out of foul trouble in the first half, but Gipson found himself ineffective as the game wore on and the Wildcats offense became less efficient.

The junior will have his hands full tonight with the Jayhawks' trio of forwards. Kansas head coach Bill Self will look to take Gipson out early by way of foul trouble.

If he's able to remain in the game, get some early looks and play the type of defense we've seen twice now against Texas center Cameron Ridley, expect K-State to hang tough with the Jayhawks through to the end.

Kansas
Freshman center Joel Embiid

It was a very Embiid-esque game for the freshman standout last month; his stat line read 11 points, nine rebounds, two assists and two blocks in just 19 minutes.

The Cameroonian handled the pressure of K-State's double team superbly all afternoon despite playing limited minutes due to foul trouble.

If Embiid is able to stay on the court, he will likely take K-State out of its postgame mentality with Gipson. If that proves to be the case, the Wildcats will be forced to hit jump shots to stay in the game, something they weren't good at in the first meeting.

Freshman guard Wayne Selden, Jr.

Wait, Kansas freshman guard Andrew Wiggins isn't a player to watch? Well, no. Whether he shoots well or not, Wiggins will likely get close to his per game average with his aggressive play at the rim.

Selden, however, is the X-factor for the Jayhawks. In the first showdown, Selden had a quiet 20 points on an efficient shooting day.

In Kansas' five losses, Selden is averaging just eight points per game. If the freshman can hit his 13.2 points per game average in Big 12 play, it should open up the scoring for the other Kansas guards.

WEBER | Frazier says Weber gets 'unfair criticism'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE T3

"It was a good job," Lowery said of Weber's decision to come to K-State. "Seeing who was here, seeing they had a lot of guys returning, seeing the vision of the AD and that it has come to fruition with the practice facility and the football side; a little bit of it is luck but it was also foresight on his part."

Weber admits that he didn't have a great working knowledge of the Big 12 before taking the K-State job. As he's developed in Manhattan, he said recruiting players that fit the style of the conference has been a high priority.

"You get a little better athlete in this league (compared to the Big Ten)," Weber said. "It seemed like every team had that 6-foot-5 to 6-foot-9 athlete that maybe you don't have. You see it in football even and it's a speed element that the Big Ten didn't quite have."

Despite a Big 12 Championship in his opening season as head coach, Weber has been unable to put the program in control.

Whether it was a second-round NCAA Tournament loss at the hands of La Salle or a season-opening loss to Northern Colorado, Weber has caught his fair share of skepticism from outside and inside the K-State community.

"I think he gets a lot of unfair criticism," Frazier said. "All he has done is win. He has won everywhere he has been and you've got to respect a guy that does things the right way."

Frazier said that in his mind, a willingness to grow and develop as a coach on a daily basis embodies what Weber has done in Manhattan.

"He has been willing to change a lot more," Frazier said. "As the game changes, you've got to change with it and that has been the key. You can't be stubborn and say we're going to do things one way. The game has evolved and I've seen coach evolve with it."

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EMILY DESHAZER | THE COLLEGIAN

Freshman guard Marcus Foster shoots a 3-pointer during the 74-57 win over Texas Saturday at Bramlage Coliseum. Foster averages 14.74 points per game, but only scored seven in the last meeting with Kansas.

K-State looks for parity with Kansas

BY SPENCER LOW
THE COLLEGIAN

will need to either find a way to give Foster open looks or to get the ball to someone else.

Kansas relied on their freshman core for the win in Allen Fieldhouse, where freshman guards Andrew Wiggins and Wayne Selden, Jr. finished with 20. Their most important player may be freshman center Joel Embiid, who finished just shy of a double-double with 11 points and nine rebounds against the Wildcats and has shown the ability to dominate the paint.

K-State continues to have serious difficulties staying even with Kansas on the hardwood. The two team's most recent matchup was at Allen Fieldhouse in Lawrence on Jan. 11, when the Jayhawks made basketball look easy in a 26-point victory. The last home-court advantage for the Wildcats was on Jan. 22, 2013 and while it was a closer fight, they still lost by four points to their in-state rival.

After his 34-point explosion against Texas over the weekend, freshman guard Marcus Foster said he will be looking to rectify himself after being shut down by Kansas head coach Bill Self's squad in the team's last meeting, where he was held to seven points on three-of-twelve shooting.

"What bothered me was the scouted defense," Foster said. "We never faced a scouted defense, so they scouted me very well. They knew every move I was going to do. I also over pressured myself about it."

If Kansas decides to focus on stopping Foster again, which is all the more likely after this weekend's showing, the Wildcats will need to find production from some players who have been quiet recently.

Junior forward Thomas Gipson has been held to single-digit scoring in three of his last four games, with just three points and 11 rebounds against Texas. His slimmed physique has paid huge dividends this season, and

"They are a top-ranked team," head coach Bruce Weber said. "They are first in the league and this is important. One, we are still fighting to get into the NCAA Tournament and the other, we have five top 50 wins. We still have several left that we are going to have challenges with, and Kansas is one of them."

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By the numbers



Bramlage Coliseum, which officially holds 12,528, will likely be crowded for the annual Sunflower Showdown. Head coach Bruce Weber is 0-4 against the Jayhawks since taking the job at K-State.

BY AUSTIN EARL
THE COLLEGIAN

0 The number of victories K-State head coach Bruce Weber has against Kansas

This is only Weber's second year at K-State, but he has already beat everyone in the conference at least once – except probably the most important one to Wildcat fans. This will be his fifth meeting against the Jayhawks as the head coach of the Wildcats.

1 The amount of games K-State has lost at home this season

Playing in the familiar confines of Bramlage Coliseum has not been a challenge for K-State this season. They have only dropped one game at home on the season, and are still perfect in conference play. No. 8 Kansas will not be the highest ranked team to play in Manhattan this season, but they could be the most dangerous. Monday will

present a big test for the Wildcats to see if they can keep their home winning streak alive.

79.3

The number of points Kansas averages offensively

K-State's six-game losing streak to their rival is painful for fans. The Wildcats will look to end that streak on Monday, playing on their own floor. The last time Kansas lost in Manhattan was Feb. 14, 2011, when Jacob Pullen scored 38 points. February 14, 2011, when Jacob Pullen scored 38 points.

34 The number of points K-State freshman Marcus Foster scored Saturday

Another performance like that could lead K-State to a victory against Kansas. Foster was incredibly efficient, shooting 81 percent from the field. The Wildcats will need a big game from Foster on Monday to knock off the Jayhawks.

12,528

The number of seats in Bramlage Coliseum

Fans from both teams pack K-State's home venue when the Jayhawks come to town. This year is expected to be no different, as Kansas is highly ranked once again. In K-State's 2011 upset of Kansas, K-State fans stormed the court after time expired in celebration of the victory over their arch rival.

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Wildcats, Jayhawks in need of 'rivalry revival'



EMILY DESHAZER | THE COLLEGIAN
K-State junior forward Thomas Gipson looks at the scoreboard as freshman guard Marcus Foster holds his head during the 86-60 loss to Kansas on Jan. 11 at Allen Fieldhouse in Lawrence.

BY DAVID EMBERS
THE COLLEGIAN

6 Consecutive games that Kansas has beaten K-State

K-State's six-game losing streak to their rival is painful for fans. The Wildcats will look to end that streak on Monday, playing on their own floor. The last time Kansas lost in Manhattan was Feb. 14, 2011, when Jacob Pullen scored 38 points. February 14, 2011, when Jacob Pullen scored 38 points.

12,528

The number of seats in Bramlage Coliseum

court are far from a rivalry. Things have become too predictable. I'm no gambling man, but if I bet Kansas basketball and K-State football every game for the past decade, I'd probably have my own island. If we want the Sunflower Showdown to be anything more than just a pillow fight, then there must be a revival.

The history is certainly there. Dating back to 1907, the Wildcats and Jayhawks have faced off 278 times on the basketball court. To put that into perspective, North Carolina and Duke began competing in 1920

and have played 236 times.

Additionally, both K-State and Kansas have vacancies that they want to fill. The Jayhawks lost Missouri to the SEC, and they are looking to transfer their collegiate-hatted elsewhere. K-State lost Nebraska to the Big 10, and has been sitting idly by waiting for a new partner in crime. It's like a match made in geography heaven. Unfortunately, things need to change before this "thing" actually becomes a rivalry. This historic matchup needs a rivalry revival.

K-State basketball continues to grow under Weber

BY ADAM SUDERMAN
THE COLLEGIAN

There likely isn't a greater compliment to give a college basketball coach than to call him a basketball junkie. For Bruce Weber, it's how his players and his assistants have come to know the 57-year-old head coach.

Having played for Weber throughout his collegiate career at Illinois, K-State assistant coach Chester Frazier said he has a strong understanding of Weber's coaching and teaching methods.

"He lives, breathes and sleeps basketball," Frazier said. "That right there gives him a one-up on the competition. He knows his stuff and he's a great X's and O's guy as well as a great offensive mind."

As freshman guard Marcus Foster navigated through the recruiting process, he said he was enamored by Weber's hunger for the game. It's a hunger that he said he believes is just as strong as the day they first met.

"I came in one night [to the Basketball Training Facility] and he was in here doing something in his office," Foster said. "He



PARKER ROBB | THE COLLEGIAN
K-State head coach Bruce Weber screams instructions at his team over the electric atmosphere of the Octagon of Doom in the waning minutes of the second half of the Wildcats' 72-66 victory over the No. 25 Oklahoma Sooners Jan. 14 in Bramlage Coliseum.



came down and rebounded for me then and helped me with my shot. He just cares for all of his players."

Since his 1978 graduation at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, coaching quickly became a key component of Weber's career. He accepted his first assistant coaching position at Western Kentucky for the following season.

Weber joined the Hilltopper program that was led by former K-State great Gene Keady. It was Keady who helped the Milwaukee, Wis., native develop an eye for the Wildcat program.

When Weber was hired at K-State in April 2012, he acknowledged Keady's influence as an important element in his decision to come to the Little Apple.

The influence spread over 19 seasons for Weber as he continued to be an assistant for the Hall of Fame coach at two different schools. After Keady accepted the job at Purdue, he brought Weber with him to West Lafayette, Ind., and the two coaches spent 18 seasons together at the helm of the Boilermaker program.

Prior to the 1998 season, Weber accepted the head-coaching job at Southern Illinois and led the Salukis to three postsea-

son trips, which included a Sweet 16 appearance and 28-8 overall record in 2001-02.

As Weber finished his fifth season at Southern Illinois, he decided to head north on Highway 57 in order to take over the Illinois Fighting Illini program.

Weber tallied a 63-9 record through his first two seasons in Champaign, which also included a 37-2 record and national championship appearance during his second season. Weber finished

his tenure with a number of up-and-down seasons that ultimately led to his firing at the conclusion of the 2011-12 season.

K-State assistant coach Chris Lowery said he credits Weber for his watchful eye in deciding where he'd like to work next and making sure he made the right call.

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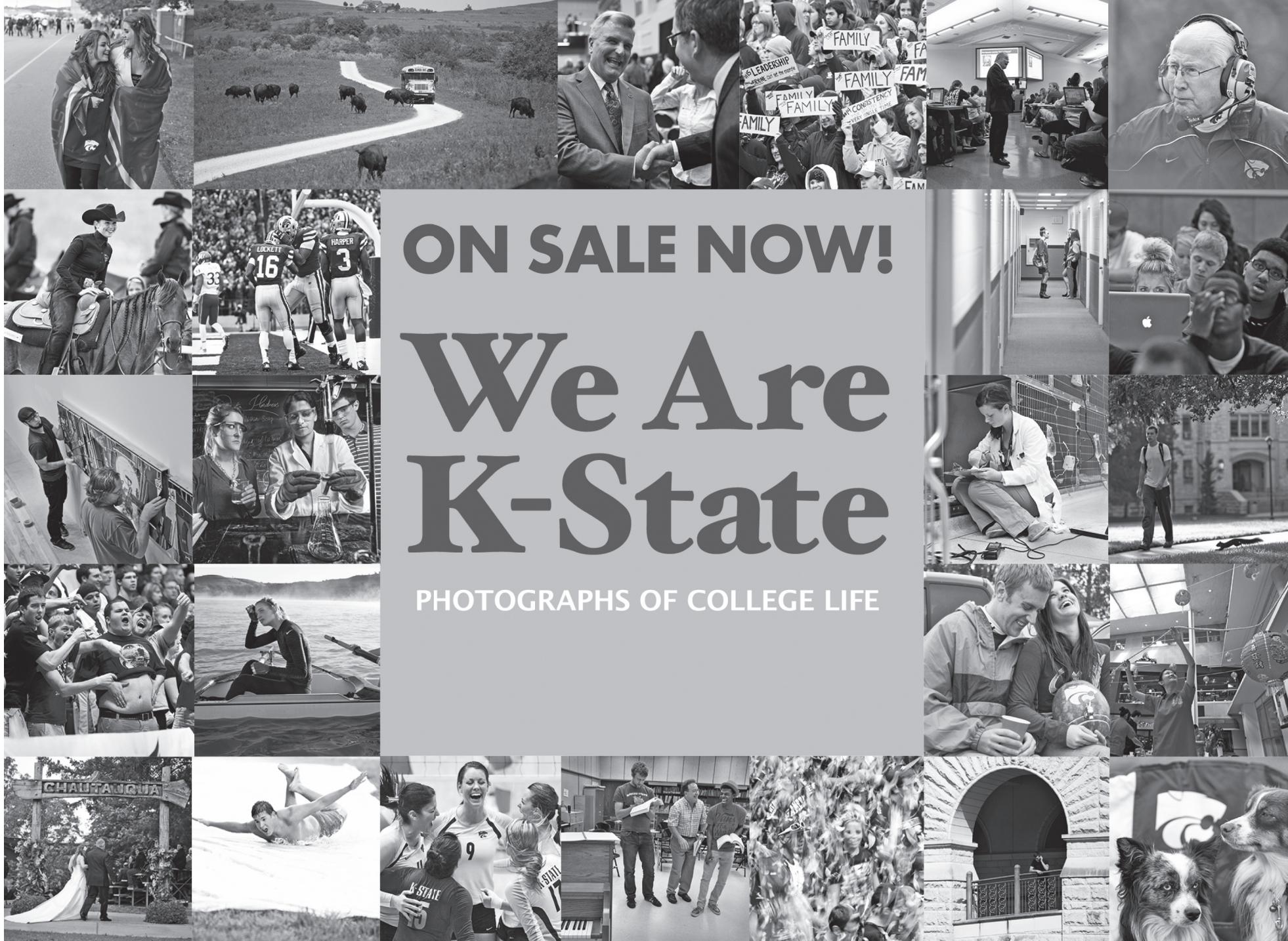
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